THE

FIRST PRINCIPLES

633

OF

English Grammar,

IN

VERSE,

For the USE of

Young People.

By *J. W. K*

Visum est Grammaticæ metricis lenire laborem
Præceptis; neque enim mentem effugientia vanum est
Principia, in causâ puerorum, adstringere vinc'lis.

GR. BUSBEIANA.

Perveniri ad summa, nisi ex Principiis, non potest.

QUINTIL.

THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF English Grammar, IN VERSE, For Young People.

BRITISH MUSEUM

By J. W.

Humbly inſcribed to

JAMES HARRIS, Eſq;

Member of Parliament,

AT

SALISBURY,

As a mark of the high eſteem of

his moſt obedient and

obliged ſervant,

J. W.

Jn Williams of Catherington

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I.

THE *Article* ſtands *with* a *Noun*,
And ſhows us its extent;
A, is *indefinite*; *A* Town:
The, *definite*; *The* Rent.

A before a conſonant; *An* before a vowel, or *h* mute.

II.

All *Subſtantives* expreſs a Thing,
Of which we think or talk;
Take *a* or *the* before; as *King*,
Houſe, *Goodneſs*, *Freedom*, *Chalk*.

Name, Noun, and Subſtantive mean the ſame Thing, and are never to be confounded with Adjectives, tho' Adjectives aſſociate with them.

III.

When Subſtantives are Plurals made,
To them an *s* is join'd;
As *Boys* from *Boy*, and *Spades* from *Spade*;
By uſe the reſt you'll find.

IV.

We from the *Saxon* have one Caſe, *
By only adding '*s*;
Thus we may ſay, the *Lady's* lace,
Or little *Maſter's* Dreſs.

* The Poſſeſſive Caſe.

V.

Of things that have no ſex, ſay *It*,
Unleſs you *Pers'nify*;
But *He* does Males, *She* Females ſit,
When ſuch we notify.

VI.

The *Adjectives* join'd to the *Name*,
Its *Attributes* expreſs;
Thus *Great* and *Little*, *Wild* and *Tame*,
This uſeful Truth confeſs.

They admit of the word *Thing* after them.

VII.

That Adjectives † have three degrees,
Neat, Neat-*er*, Neat-*eſt* ſhow;
But ev'ry little School-boy ſees,
They can no farther go.

† i. e. Thoſe that admit of *more* or *leſs*.

VIII.

Attributes of *Quantity*, *Quality*, or *Relation*. See HERMES.

VIII.

Pronominal Substantives

The *Pronoun* ſtandeth *for* a *Name*, ‡
As *It*, *He*, *Thou*, and *I*:
Some Adjectives ſpring from the ſame,
As *Your*, *Thy*, *Our*, and *My*.

Pronominal Adjectives.

‡ Of a *Perſon* or *Thing*, prevents diſagreeable repetitions, and enables us to ſpeak *to*, or *of* Perſons at firſt ſight.

IX.

I, *Thou*, *He*, *She*, *We*, *Ye*, *Who*, *They*,
Are leading words, we find;
Me, *Thee*, *Him*, *Her*, *Us*, *Them*, all may
Come properly behind.

X.

But *Whom*, tho' govern'd by the Verb,
Is yet before it plac'd;
The Lady, who gave me this Herb,
Was one *Whom* Virtue grac'd.

XI.

The *Relatives*, *who* *which*, and *that*,
Do *Antecedents* * own,
Join *Sentences*; The little Bat,
Which I had caught, is flown.

* Foregoing Subſtantives

XII.

The Verb * affirms with Mode and Time,
To *be*, *do*, *ſuffer*, ſhows;
But this exceeds the pow'r of rhyme,
As each fair Damſel knows.

* Takes *I* or *It* before it. It denotes Energy, that is, Motion, or its Privation. As, *To walk* *To ſee*.

XIII.

To *do*, the Active verbs expreſs,
To *ſuffer*, Paſſives note;
I beat, *am beaten*.——This I gueſs,
A Child may learn by rote.

XIV.

The Verb denotes an *Attribute* with an *Aſſertion* and *Time*. Take away the *Aſſertion* you have the Participle: Take away the *Time*, and the Participle becomes an Adjective. See HERMES.

XIV.

To *be* the *Neuter* verbs imply,
Or ſtate of being paint,
I am, *I walk*, *I ſleep*, *I fly*,
It *rains*, it *hails*, I *faint*.

† He beats me.
He loves me.
*He ſleeps.
He reigns.

XV.

Verbs active, *Tranſitive* we call,
Becauſe they *farther* tend;
But neuter Verbs, to *ſit*, to *fall*,
Find in themſelves an End.

XVI.

There are in Engliſh twice three † times,
He's going, Preſent notes;
But he *is gone*, (excuſe my rhymes)
Now paſt and finiſh'd quotes.

† Preſent, Paſt, Future, both *Imperfect* and *Perfect*; or *Paſſing* and *Finiſhed*. See *Hoadly's* Accidence.

XVII.

Was going, may unfiniſh'd mark,
Was gone, then finiſh'd ſhow;
He will be going, when 'tis dark,
When *he'll be gone*, you'll know.

XVIII.

The Engliſh Tenſes change no end,
Except the paſt alone;
As, *love*, and *loved*; I *defend*,
Defended; *own'd*, and *own*.

† In the ſolemn ſtile we ſay thou gain-*eſt*, he gain-*eth*, and in the paſt time, thou loved-*eſt*, and loved'*ſt*.

XIX.

Each Perſon ſtill the ſame remains,
Third ſingular takes *s*,
I, *you*, *we gain*; 'tis *he* that *gains*, †
He gueſſes, and *I gueſs*.

XX.

Auxiliaries ‡ *Am*, *do*, *have*, *will*,
In Engliſh we may find;
Let him, who *can*, exert his ſkill,
Theſe Verbs in verſe to bind.

‡ The Helping Verbs are nine—Am, have, do, will, ſhall, may, let, can, muſt.

XXI.

XXI.

Th' Indicative * *aſks*, or *declares*;
Th' Imperative *commands*;
Where *is* it? It *is* on the Stairs;
Make haſte, and *waſh* your Hands.

* Mode, or Mood.

XXII.

There is too a Subjunctive Mode,
To other words *ſubjoin'd*;
He'd find to happineſs the road,
If he *were* juſt and kind.

XXIII.

Th' Infinitive makes *infinite*,
Perſon and *Number* too; *
Now learn *to read*, if you think fit,
It ſuits not you *to woo*.

* It leaves both unlimited, and is called the Subſtantive Mode. A finite verb is confined to one Perſon and to one number.

XXIV.

'Tis known with † *To* its place to take
Moſt other Verbs behind;
Yet *bid*, *dare*, *need*, *feel*, *hear*, *ſee*, *make*,
Chuſe it, from *To* disjoin'd.

† *To* is not a Prepoſition here, but a diſtinguiſhing mark of the Infinitive Mode.

XXV.

Of *Participles* next I ſing,
From Verbs they aptly flow; †
They Time expreſs; *d*, *t*, *n*, *ing*,
Their Ends in Engliſh ſhow.

† Loving, Loved, Taught, Slain. † In Latin, &c.

XXVI.

Impers'nal Verbs (it is confeſt)
Are in no Language found;
The Pronoun *It*, † when not expreſt,
Gave ſuch a notion ground,

XXVII.

Adverbs expreſs the *Attributes*
Of *Adjectives* and *Verbs*:
This Border moſt *exactly ſuits*,
Theſe *highly fragrant* Herbs.

XXVIII.

XXVIII.

The *Prepoſitions* Words unite,
And their *Relations* ſhow;
Thus Billy beats *with* all his might,
And triumphs *o'er* his Foe.

Caſes were invented in the learned Languages, to ſupply the place of ſome of the Prepoſitions.

XXIX.

When they to be *Connectives* ceaſe,
They into Adverbs grow
The Lawyer walks *about*, the Leaſe
Lies with the Bond *below*.

XXX.

Conjunctions † Sentences unite,
And make of *two* but *one*;
Thus Billy loves to ſcratch and fight,
But weeps *when* he has done.

† Thoſe Conjunctions which conjoin ſentences, and denote *Time* and *Place*, as *When*, *where*, &c. are called *Adverbial Conjunctions*.

XXXI.

The ‡ *Interjection* caſt between,
All other words we find;
It marks, *alas!* as we have ſeen,
Some Paſſion of the mind.

‡ It implies a ſort of ſentence, and expreſſes ſome ſudden Affection felt by the Mind.

XXXII.

Each *Sentence*, *Verſe*, and *Proper Name*,
Great Letters ſtill begin;
Emphatic Words great Letters claim,
As, *Billy* ſaw the *King*.

* It diſfigures one's Writing to uſe Capitals in all Subſtantives.

We

* I. Copulatives couple ſentences that have no neceſſary connection, *(And)*. Continuatives couple ſentences that have a neceſſary connection, and are, 1. Conditionals, *(If)*. 2. Cauſals, *(Becauſe)*. 3. Collectives, *(Therefore)*.

II. Disjunctives ſimply disjoin the ſenſe, *(either, or)*; Adverſatives denote oppoſition. *(But)*.

We have one excellent Grammar of the Engliſh Tongue, written by the learned and judicious Dr. LOWTH, and it is, in my Opinion, the beſt extant.

I muſt alſo recommend a univerſal Grammar, intitled *Hermes*, written by the Prince of modern Grammarians, JAMES HARRIS, Eſquire.

THERE is no language in the world ſo natural and ſimple as the Engliſh. It does not mark the relations of words by Caſes, or artificial changes of their endings, but by prefixing Prepoſitions before them. The Subſtantive has no Caſe but the Poſſeſſive, and the Adjective has neither Caſe nor Number. The Articles, by limiting the extent of the meaning of Subſtantives, prevent ambiguity.

The Article [*The*] aſcertains the very individual.

The Engliſh Verb has but a few changes to form Tenſes and Perſons; and if we determine the Number of Modes by the variations of the endings of Verbs, and not by their meanings, the Indicative Mode with the nine Auxiliaries and their Tenſes, will be ſufficient to expreſs all the perceptions and volitions of the mind, or the different manners of being, doing, and ſuffering. The Engliſh Subjunctive is now ſeldom uſed, unleſs in expreſſing Doubt; as if he *were*, &c.

The Pronoun has only two Caſes; the Nominative, *I*, &c. and the Objective, *me*, &c. The latter follows active verbs, and prepoſitions.

It is not at all neceſſary to diſtinguiſh between the Engliſh Conjugations; tho' it may be eaſily done, by obſerving that the *Firſt* has its Participle paſt
in ——————— *d*;
The *ſecond* in *t*;
The *third* in *n*;

The Participle preſent always ends in *ing*; and none of the Participles has either Caſe or Number.

The Engliſh Tongue is pretty regular in every thing, except the Pronunciation; for tho' it has 4300 verbs, yet the whole Number of the irregular and defective verbs, taken together, is about 170. See Lowth's Grammar.

It is true, the *Participle Paſſive* is often different from the *Time paſt*, as *woven* * and *wove*; yet we have not a hundred verbs that are thus irregular.

* Some polite writers, to avoid the naſal ſound of *n*, ſometimes write *I have wove*, but not in the ſolemn ſtile.

The Interjections (whereof we have but few) Prepoſitions, Conjunctions, and Adverbs, admit of no variations; excepting only, that a few of the Adverbs form degrees of Compariſon, as, *often*, *oftener*, *oftenеſt*.

The Engliſh Syntax is ſo natural and eaſy, that it ſcarce requires any Rules.

I hope that Mr. *Johnſon*'s juſtly celebrated Dictionary has fixed our Spelling, and the meaning of our Words.

FINIS.

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